



Council for Responsible Sport Encourages Endurance Events to Join United Nations “Sports for Climate Action Initiative” as it recognizes commitments from Bank of America Chicago Marathon and more

The Bank of America Chicago Marathon, one of the Abbott World Marathon Majors, is among the first mass participation events to sign declaration of commitment alongside the Council for Responsible Sport campaign, dubbed #getoffthesidelines.

EUGENE (June 19, 2019) – The Council for Responsible Sport announced today that the Bank of America Chicago Marathon, the Sacramento Running Association, the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Run, the U.S. Marine Corps Marathon, Rhode Races, and Grandma’s Marathon have become early signatories to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) “Sports for Climate Action Initiative”.

The “Sports for Climate Action Initiative” invites sport event hosts to declare their recognition of “the critical need for cities, regions, companies and investors from around the globe to help implement the Paris Climate Agreement and accelerate the transformative change needed to reach greenhouse gas (GHG) emission neutrality in the second half of the twenty-first century.” It offers five principles to guide forward action that leverages the global popularity of sport to help make a real difference in the battle against climate change, as well as help minimize the environmental footprint of sporting events.

The commitments announced today represent events that host over 100,000 participants and more than a million onlookers annually, with the **Bank of America Chicago Marathon** being one of the six Abbott World Marathon Majors and one of the largest participatory sport gatherings in the U.S.-- with over 40,000 participants during an October weekend in Chicago each year.

The Bank of America Chicago Marathon has utilized the standards set forth by the Council for Responsible Sport to develop and improve performance on social and environmental impacts over the past decade, beginning with its first certification in 2010 and culminating with it becoming the first marathon to earn the highest level, Evergreen certification in 2016, a status it maintains today.

“Best practices in sustainability have been a part of our operational culture for the last decade, and we are proud to be one of the first mass participatory sporting events to support the Sports for Climate Action initiative,” said Carey Pinkowski, executive race director. “The Bank of America Chicago Marathon has been at the forefront of the industry when it comes to environmental stewardship, social responsibility and community engagement. We are proud of the legacy we continue to build, and we are thrilled to join a global movement that deepens our commitment to sustainability. We strongly believe that the power of sport can create positive changes beyond the finish line.”

The Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile run held each spring in Washington, D.C. first earned responsible sport certification at the silver level in 2011. It leveled up to gold in 2015, and has maintained that high level of performance. Event director Phil Stewart commented, "the organizers of the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile have been committed to creating a more sustainable event for the last five years. The logical next step in ensuring the future of our planet is to support and join the United National Sports for Climate Action initiative."



Sacramento Running Association, host of the **California International Marathon**, which earned gold level certification in 2017 and will seek renewal in 2019, signed the declaration. “The Sacramento Running Association is proud to be a signatory of the Sports for Climate Action Framework. California leads the nation on environmental issues, and as one of its capital city's signature sport organizations we believe it's important for us to lead the way on sustainability in sporting events. We believe in sports' promise to be a force for good in the world, and by signing onto this framework the SRA is committing to help fulfill that promise.” said Eli Asch, Race Director of the California International Marathon.

This year, the **U.S. Marine Corps Marathon** in Arlington, Virginia will seek to renew its certification first gained in 2010 and is committed to the declaration. “The Marine Corps Marathon Organization is proud to encourage athletes for a healthier lifestyle and a healthier world. An approach to climate change is similar to training for a marathon, the actions and will to change inside of us positively affects the outcome of many. As runners we take care of our bodies, and as people we take care of each other and the world. Running connects us to nature and every step is one towards a better future.” said Angela Anderson, Deputy Race Director.

Rhode Races hosts more than a dozen events in Rhode Island annually, including the Newport and Providence Marathons. Co-owner Susan Rancourt said of becoming a signatory, “As more than just race directors--as mothers, sisters, aunts and friends-- it is our compelling duty to leave this planet in a better place for our children and their children. We can take small steps in our own business practices and communication to help advocate change on a greater scale.”

“Living directly adjacent to the largest body of fresh water in the world (Lake Superior), we at **Grandma's Marathon** see it as imperative to become better stewards of our natural resources.” Said Shane Bauer, executive director of Grandma's Marathon in Duluth, Minnesota, of why the organization is opting to make the declaration and adhere to its principles. “Regardless of where people live, everyone should be doing everything they can, wherever they are. When awareness that drives action becomes normal, I think we'll see great signs of progress towards a safer, more sustainable world.”

All Sport Event Hosting Organizations Encouraged to Sign On

The Council for Responsible Sport is collaborating with the United Nations Global Climate Action program to collect signatories and facilitate collaboration amongst those organizations committed to the principles of the declaration.

Manager of the United Nations Global Climate Action Program, Niclas Svenningsen, said “Climate change is a defining issue of our time. We are no longer talking about leaving the world a better place for our children, and are already experiencing initial climate effects such as extreme weather events, year-on-year record heat waves and an increasing number of climate refugees. The endurance events sector is one of many that is already being impacted to varying degrees. I am therefore very happy to see that there is now a movement spearheaded by the Council for Responsible Sport to harness the power of the more than 17,000 endurance events taking place annually in the USA alone, to take action and encourage a more responsible and participatory approach to meeting the climate crisis.”



"The Council is thrilled that this work is advancing to the highest levels of international governance," said chairperson of the Council, Michele Grossman. "Since 2014, when it became mandatory for events pursuing Council certification to track their carbon footprint, we have analyzed greenhouse gas reports from over 50 events," said chairperson of the Council, Michele Grossman.

"The vast majority of emissions from endurance events are from participants' travel. We're excited to recognize events that find ways to decrease and mitigate their emissions, such as how the Credit Union Cherry Blossom Ten Mile Run makes it easy for participants to offset their carbon footprint during the registration process."

The "Sports for Climate Action Initiative" was launched in Bonn, Germany in December 2018. Other signatories to join since the program launched in December 2018 include the International Olympic Committee, FIFA, the National Basketball Association (NBA), the World Surf League (WSL) and the New York Yankees.

The most recent International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report warns that globally, humanity has about 12 years to act decisively to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions causing the overall warming trend and destabilizing Earth's climate system, and that failure to do so will result in ecological and societal effects becoming more and more dire.

About the Council for Responsible Sport

The Council's vision is a world where responsibly produced sports events are the norm and its mission is to provide objective, independent verification of the socially and environmentally responsible work event organizers are doing and to actively support event organizers who strive to make a difference in their communities. The current version of the Council's Certification standards (v.4.2) was developed by an outside working group of both sustainability and sport industry experts, reviewed by a wide range of stakeholders throughout 2013 and implemented in January 2014. In 2019, the Council is working to help sport hosting organizations #getoffthesidelines and take climate action, starting by signing onto the "Sports for Climate Action Initiative" declaration of commitment. www.CouncilforResponsibleSport.org

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